

# An ode to the old language of love, art and culture



Writers Saif Mahmood and Javed Akhtar will talk during a session on day 2

## Catch It Live

**What:** Jashn-e-Reklita 2023  
**Where:** Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, India Gate Circle  
**When:** December 8 (6pm to 9pm)  
**Nearest Metro Station:** Supreme Court (Blue Line)

**W**hat most of you know today as Urdu language was once called Rekhta. Renowned poet Mirza Ghalib also wrote in Rekhta, which came to be known as Urdu in the late 19th Century. And this is the language that the popular festival, Jashn-e-Rekhta, is devoted to.

"Urdu is a language of love. There is no scope of any religion or small-mindedness in the language itself," shares Huma Khalil, trustee, Rekhta Foundation, adding, "The 45 sessions this year will cover all aspects of Urdu language and allow those with a hectic life, especially the youngsters, to let their hair down and feel alive."

To bring this vision to life, there will be 150-plus artistes who will perform across the

four stages that are set up at the venue. Not just panel discussions, but almost every possible form of art and culture will be celebrated through this multi-hued event, starting from ghazal, qawwali and Sufi music to dastangoi, poetry and food!

Mahmood Farooqui, writer-director-dastango, who will present Dastan-e-Meer, says, "This dastan celebrates 300 years of Meer Taqi Meer, who was one of the biggest poets of 18th Century.... Even today, those who don't know Meer know his phrases such as 'Jaan hai toh jahaan hai'. That's how relevant this poet is and will always be."

Among the theatrical performances is also the play *With Love, Aapki Saiyaara*. Juhi Babbar Soni, writer-director-actor, says, "I feel the audience will surely resonate with the character of Saiyaara, who speaks Hindustani."

**Henna Rakheja**

I'll be discussing my books, *The Anarchy* and *The Last Mughal*, and focus on the literary lives of the protagonists.

**WILLIAM DALRYMPLE,**  
 Historian <sup>aut</sup>hor



PHOTO: SHANTANU BHATTACHARYA/HT



Singer Javed Ali will conclude the fest with his Sufi notes



Singer Rekha Bhardwaj and filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj will open the fest with a ghazal and Sufi recital



Juhi Babbar Soni in the play *With Love, Aapki Saiyaara*  
 PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM